

# Saudi Women Entrepreneur Over Coming Barriers In ALKhuber

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the extent to which entrepreneurship is possible for women in Saudi Arabia, and its potential to increase Saudi women's socio-cultural autonomy, financial independence, and overall well-being. The study uses interviews and an online surveys to gather information from recognized female entrepreneurs, those officially registered with the Women's Business Center in Alkhuber, Saudi Arabia, about how they founded their businesses, the challenges they have experienced, and the effects of business ownership. These women are interesting because their experience seems to run counter to Saudi society, which generally restricts women's activities. The study's findings show that despite their successes, Arab traditions still hinder the success of Alkhuber female entrepreneurs, for instance, by requiring male guardianship and prohibiting travel unaccompanied by a man. From an institutional perspective, administrative and legal requirement can prevent women from fully realizing their potential as businesswomen. The existing women's rights legislation lacks authority because political opportunities for Alkhuber women are still limited. For Saudi women entrepreneurship remains an alternative to joblessness and dissatisfaction derived from other employment sources. The challenges women entrepreneurs experience while starting businesses are lack of support from the executive branch of government, lack of quality education, and lack of available financial resources, in addition to the cultural barriers caused by Arab traditions restricting the activities of women. However, a key finding from this study is that the women interviewed all showed a high level of

resourcefulness and creativity that helped them to circumvent such obstacles. This study recommends that the government provide financial services, or training programs to aspiring female entrepreneurs and offer incentives for women to register their businesses. This will benefit not just Saudi women but for the Saudi economy overall.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the future of the field of global technology and development,  
and to my family. Thank you for your unconditional support.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship has become an important topic of academic discourse, particularly with respect to women's rights and their experiences in business ownership. While women in North America may face financial obstacles and biases favoring male entrepreneurs, women in other countries face similar challenges but are also confronted with additional institutionalized cultural and legal obstacles. In Saudi Arabia it is often extremely incredibly difficult for female business owners to conduct business and make necessary connections with other entrepreneurs and even interact with customers. They face numerous difficulties due to inadequate financing and government support, a lack of business education opportunities, and also particular obstacles related to religious and cultural factors. For example, a major legal obstacle is that women require a male guardian's permission to work or travel. This legal roadblock arises from cultural and religious doctrines. This significantly impacts their opportunities to open their own businesses or even gain employment outside the home.

Yet despite being faced with so many barriers, a small but rising number of female citizens of Saudi Arabia are entering the world of commerce and building their own relatively successful businesses. Additionally, women of Saudi Arabia are just starting to be recognized by the government as having a part to play in the country's economic development and political system. The role of female entrepreneurs and



business leaders in Saudi Arabia is thus becoming more important than ever to studies of gender and entrepreneurship.

This research study focuses on the ways in which business ownership can contribute to attaining aspects of independence in a society that has traditionally strict laws and social norms concerning women's autonomy. In particular, this study focuses on a small group of middle class women in Alkhuber, Saudi Arabia and looks at their paths to success. An in depth analysis of surveys and interviews drew out several common themes suggesting that female entrepreneurship not only affects larger attitudes and practices regarding personal freedoms and social progress but reveals that some women can in fact make a vital contribution to economic development in Saudi Arabia.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia, detailing the challenges they face when trying to open their own businesses and how they overcame these challenges. By tracing their paths, the hope is to identify particular challenges and propose ways future women entrepreneurs can attempt to avoid them. This study will focus on a group of seven women from Alkhuber, Saudi Arabia, which is located in the eastern region of the Kingdom and is the largest commercial center in the eastern region. For example Alrashed Mall, which is the largest shopping center, is located in this area. These women have ultimately been successful in their business endeavors. An important goal of this study is to understand how despite cultural, religious, and legal obstacles, these women were able to start their businesses and find success. In documenting their trajectories, this research is able to propose helpful avenues (e.g. such as establishing entrepreneurial training programs) that will

benefit future female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia in establishing their businesses more easily.

Objectives:

1. Situate this research within the field of women's studies and business in the Middle East, particularly with respect to literature on the subject of Saudi female entrepreneurship.
2. Identify the cultural, institutional, and legal barriers specific to Saudi Arabian society that women face when starting private businesses (e.g. women cannot legally drive).
3. Identify the personal barriers that Saudi women perceive affect their efforts to starting private businesses (e.g. lack of self-esteem).
4. Identify the types of training (including levels of education) women complete in order to establish their own businesses.
5. Evaluate whether existing entrepreneurial training programs and education help Saudi women gain gender equity in terms of increased social, political, and financial freedoms.

The Problem:

Women in Saudi Arabia do not have the same freedoms as men to interact in society, and they do not benefit from the same considerations as men when dealing with government bureaucracies.

Considering the inherent gender-based cultural barriers in Saudi society, how do women achieve entrepreneurship? Thus this thesis seeks to:

1. Identify the educational background and training women entrepreneurs have in common.
2. Identify what might make the entrepreneurs unique or different than other Saudi women.

#### Background of the Problem:

In order to understand the struggle facing Saudi women who strive for private business ownership, it is important to understand the cultural and historical factors that influence the obstacles they face. Hamdan (2005) states, “the historical socio-economic and political conditions of Saudi Arabia are an essential aspect of understanding a woman’s position in Saudi society” (p.42). As a female citizen of Saudi Arabia, I argue that in addition to outlining the institutional or legal challenges women face, it is crucial to understand this struggle by also examining the perceptions and attitudes Saudi women have about themselves. Based upon my initial observational studies in the summer of 2012, I observed that many Saudi women seem to lack self-confidence, have a fear of failure and believe they will succumb to social pressures to fulfill more traditional gender roles. However, my research findings have since revealed a considerable amount of enterprise and success among the women studied.

While there is indeed an overall emphasis on maintaining traditional gender roles (e.g. women remain as caretakers of the home and not employed in the public sector), there have been some major transitions that have begun to occur in the past few years. According to a study at done King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi women hold nearly 70% of the bank accounts in the Kingdom, with deposits worth SAR 62 billion. They hold 20% of corporate shares and own 15% of the private companies and 10% of the real estate sector. There are approximately 23,000 Saudi businesswomen. Much of this can be attributed to changes in political circumstances.

King Abdullah has opened many doors to women of Saudi Arabia. He has declared that Saudi women can join the Parliament by ordering that women will have the right to run and vote in the 2010 local elections, and be appointed to the Shura Council, which is the most influential political body of the country. King Abdullah also gave permission that women can now work in lingerie shops and might as well enter sports stadiums. Because of King Abdullah, women of Saudi will no longer finish their education for nothing. Saudi women will be playing a big part on the economy and the government. The step forward of putting women on the Shura Council, and King Abdullah's promise that women can vote in the 2015 municipal elections, raises the prospect of women holding ministerial posts. The struggle for economic empowerment is especially important to Saudi women and for a country seeking to transform its economy.

This is an exciting period in history for women in Saudi Arabia. It appears that legitimate steps have been taken toward more equal rights. Yet with the changing political climate, Saudi women are in a precarious position. They are presented with new

opportunities in political and economic arenas but must still contend with very strongly engrained Arab traditions of female subservience. This study is important in that it explores the reality of the situation from the perspective of the women who are at the forefront of change.

#### Significance of the Research:

Research studies of female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia are important and beneficial first and foremost to Saudi women who strive for independence, political influence, and social freedoms. Outlining the path that current successful female entrepreneurs have taken can serve as a guide for future female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. It will help them to overcome and even avoid some of the challenges they will face. With policies regarding women in government changing, this appears the ideal time to examine ways in which women can also make progress on the economic front. This study will identify the opportunities that Saudi women have to develop the Saudi economy in the same ways as their male counterparts. Secondly, this study provides a depth of information regarding the personal experiences of women entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. In comparison to a strictly statistical study, this provides a much more nuanced understanding of the challenges women face and therefore contributes to a means to develop experienced-based training programs that can be implemented. This model of research documenting the challenges and strategies for success can be applied to studies of female entrepreneurs in any country, whether it be in the United States or developing countries.

### Limitations:

There are some limitations to be acknowledged. This study interviewed a group of women who have achieved some level of success as entrepreneurs in Saudi society. All of these women can be considered to come from a relatively, economically privileged background. Being able to obtain funding from sources other than the government played a large part in their success. Therefore findings from this study could be extrapolated to women of a similar economic background but not to Saudi women of limited means or coming from lower income families. A future study of women from this economic group would prove very fruitful to gain a wider perspective of economic or employment opportunities for Saudi women.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND ON SAUDI CULTURE AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

#### **Background:**

In the middle of the 1990s, Arab countries experienced extremely low literacy rates. UNESCO (1995) statistics indicate that for these nations, illiterate people made up between one-fifth and one-half of the state's population (Mazawi, 2002, p.62). Illiteracy rates are higher among women, especially in rural areas (Mazawi, 2002, p.62). In response to this problem, the Al Saud family has invested heavily in education over the past fifteen years, including education for women. King Abdullah has placed particular emphasis on the promotion of higher education for women. At present, women make up 58 percent of Saudi Arabia's university students (Minkus-McKenna, 2009, p.9). Women are enrolling in business and management courses in diverse fields, such as finance and health care (Eid, 2005). Although Saudi women have come a long way (Kayed & Hassan, 2010; Salime, 2010), present weaknesses and threats to their educational development continue to exist, such as the cultural and religious practices which led to policies that institutionalize sex segregation (Dechant & Lamky, 2005; Le Renard, 2008; Mazawi, 2002). Due to existing obstacles, women compose only 15 percent of the Saudi workforce (Vaid, 2011, p.446).

The review of literature examines the obstacles, weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats to Saudi female entrepreneurship. Previous studies that investigate the advantages and disadvantages of female entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia are included.

#### Weaknesses in the Education and Training System for Women in Saudi Arabia :

Availability and accessibility of quality higher education are two major requirements for the socio-economic development of women. Women make up one-half of the population, and their poverty rate greatly affects the national economic state of any country (Alsuwaigh, 1989; Abdul aziz Alsahlawi & Gardener, 2004). Although women are permitted to pursue higher education and graduate studies in Saudi Arabia, colleges and universities lack the social empowerment that would improve the quality of their learning experiences. Sex segregation is practiced in schools and universities, and classrooms are segregated based upon gender (Mtango, 2004, p.55). Women's facilities are often inferior compared to men's. Class sizes for women are larger, and male teachers for men are better trained and educated "with more than 34 percent of the professors at the men's universities holding doctorates, as compared with only 3 percent of their counterparts at women's universities" (Mtango, 2004, p.55). Access to important educational facilities is limited because of sex segregation policies. At the King Saud University in Riyadh, women are scheduled to use the libraries a few hours a week, while men can use them the rest of the time (Mtango, 2004, p.55). Universities suffer from a shortage of female professors and instructors (Mtango, 2004, p.55). Technology eases this shortage somewhat, as male teachers instruct female students through closed-circuit



television. In this way, teachers and students do not interact directly (Mtango, 2004, p.55). Gender is a key ingredient in the discussion about educational development in Saudi Arabia. The sex segregation policies in the educational facilities of Saudi Arabia delimit the learning experiences of women (Mtango, 2004, p.55). There are startling differences between the quality and opportunities for education between Saudi men and women. Saudi men are clearly given far more access to education and resources than women. Clearly, women who seek to be entrepreneurs start out with significant disadvantages due to lesser quality education. Women have less time to research business practices (use the library), less interaction with experts in their fields, and less opportunities to make contacts with other entrepreneurs or future entrepreneurs. They come out of this system less qualified due to the biased institutional structure.

In 2000, Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 10 of CEDAW stipulates that States' Parties are to take all appropriate measures to ensure equal rights between men and women in accessing affordable, quality education. This means that women should benefit from "the same curricula, the same examinations, a teaching staff with the same qualifications and standards, and school premises and equipment of the same quality." Poor classroom conditions and services at educational facilities for women in Saudi Arabia constitute a breach of the amendment that seeks to provide the same quality of education to women as that of men. Even so, girls are subjected to inferior conditions compared to boys, which violates their human rights when they are denied equal standards that would place them on an equal level (Achoui, 2009).

Women who can only use university libraries in limited timeframes are denied equal access compared to their male counterparts, which violates the Convention. The State has an obligation to ensure that women and men have access to education that is equal in all aspects without disadvantaging either group.

Nevertheless, the Saudi attitude toward women's education can be summed up by the former Superintendent General Mohammed bin Adwa: "It is essential that female students be steered toward feminine disciplines. There is no need for women to compete with men in disciplines that are not suited to their nature" (Mtango, 2004, p.56). Rawaf and Simmons (1991) observed that conservative Arab cultures believe education poisons their daughters' minds. Al-Yousef (2009) highlights findings that mothers fear for the safety of their daughters when they are studying far from home for extended periods of time. The result of these deeply rooted cultural attitudes and beliefs is a limited curriculum for women with less emphasis on academic subjects and greater emphasis on the Qur'an and Islamic studies.

Despite considerable efforts made by the Saudi government to educate women, their education lacks the specialized training required by the private sector, resulting in high unemployment rates among female university graduates. In 2001, there were 54,000 unemployed female graduates looking for jobs, and the General Civil Service Office was not able to provide them with work. Some women did not want to relocate far from their homes (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002), and others did not undertake academic subjects that fulfilled occupational requirements.

Calvert and Al-Shetaiwi (2002) examined Technical and Vocational Education (TEVT), and concluded that the academic subjects of study did not adequately prepare women for jobs in the private sector. TEVT trains women for the textile industry, but out of 135 textile factories employing 16,800 workers, over 95 percent of the staff is non-Saudi.

Smaller sewing factories employ up to 90 percent male non-Saudi workers (Ministry of Industry and Electricity, 1999, pp.141–53 cited in Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002).

Calvert and Al-Shetaiwi (2002) made inquiries into what factors contribute to the gap in employment between men and women in Saudi Arabia. Their research identifies the lack of relevant, quality education for Saudi women and the impact this lack has on their prospects for employment. Calvert and Al-Shetaiwi (2002) examined the studies of Al-Bakar (1990), Al-Nimer (1988, 1989), Al-Husaini (1993), Al-Ghaith and Al-Mashoq (1996), Ben-Duheash (1995), Katan (1995), Saudi Civil Office (1996), Al-Nuaim (1997), Al-Hazmi (1997), Al-Ghamdi (1998), Al-Rushaid (1998), Al-Saban (1998), Al-Husaini (1999), and Da-Ghstani (2000). All lament the low employment opportunities and options for Saudi women.

Calvert and Al-Shetaiwi (2002) studied the mismatch between skills and workplace requirements in the technical and vocational fields. In 1995-1996, 5 percent of Technical and Vocational Education (TEVT) students were women. This is low compared to an average of 29 percent in other Islamic countries and 45 percent in Japan (UNESCO, 1997, 1999 cited in Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002). Studies show that 63 percent of those surveyed state that they know of TEVT through other programs (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002), 83 percent state that technical and vocational jobs in the private

sector are limited for women in spite of the high demand for qualified workers (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002), and 63 percent of managers who know about TEVT state that TEVT is not sufficient to qualify women for technical and vocational jobs in the private sector (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002).

When asked why TEVT did not deliver what was required to increase women's employment rates, the following reasons were cited:

1. The lack of female staff in TEVT institutions; 93.4 percent.
2. A mismatch between TEVT output and the needs of the private sector; 80.9 percent.
3. A lack of cooperation between the public and private sector concerning TEVT programs and courses; 70.8 percent.
4. A shortage of facilities in TEVT institutions for women; 64.8 percent.
5. Lack of planning in TEVT policy for women; 60.4 percent (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002).

Prevailing attitudes held by women and society at large regarding work in the private sector coupled with negative attitudes of managers towards female workers increases the difficulties of managers that do hire Saudi women. Women are further discouraged from work in the private sector by the perception that there is more security for them in the public sector.

### Domestic and cultural obstacles among Saudi Women:

Women confront particular obstacles starting and operating businesses, and they admit that there are challenges that make it difficult for them to become entrepreneurs (Dechant & Lamky, 2005; Le Renard, 2008; Mazawi, 2002). Some families are not supportive of female family members becoming entrepreneurs (Minkus-McKenna, 2009) because of conservative attitudes regarding women's activities (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002). Women continue to be the main caregivers in the family, and without family and social support, they cannot handle the additional demands of managing a business (Hutchings, Metcalfe, & Cooper, 2010). Gender stereotypes also impact businesswomen in areas where men dominate (Al-Yousef, 2009).

Some Saudi women have a poor self-image, low self-esteem, and a lack of self-confidence that is rooted in cultural and religious beliefs, which prevent them from pursuing education and entrepreneurship, (Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). The Al-Sayedah Khadijah Bint Khuwailid Businesswomen Center is the first business center that caters to the struggles and challenges Saudi women experience in the business community. This project supports Saudi women entering into entrepreneurship by tackling important subjects, such as gender sensitivity and transparent policymaking. The center aims to provide pertinent solutions to such problems by providing women with a support system and networking opportunities. As a result of the Center's lobbying efforts, gender-differentiation policies are being revolutionized and eradicated. Dr. Basmah Omair acknowledges the potential of the Center's non-confrontational methodology, observing how this approach seeks to obtain partnerships with men and draw support from them in the government and the private sector.

The Center considers the wife of Prophet Mohammad, Sayedah Khadijah, a successful businesswoman of her time. Bolstered by her story, women are able to understand their potential and importance in the business community. This example puts women on the road to regaining their self-confidence and teaches them about balancing the demands of family life with work (Rawaf & Simmons, 1991).

Social conditions impact Saudi women's motivation to study and aspire to management and entrepreneurial positions (Clarke, 2007; Montagu, 2010). Hutchings, Metcalfe, and Cooper (2010) studied four key barriers for women undertaking international assignments: "corporate resistance, foreigner prejudices, women's own disinterest, and a lack of family and/or other support mechanisms" (Hutchings et al., 2010, p.61). Many middle-eastern women want to take international assignments but are discouraged by family demands, especially when their children are young. It is not difficult to understand why Saudi women have reservations about entering into higher education and entrepreneurship. The very fact of their gender presents social challenges that discourage them from freely pursuing higher education, employment, and career goals.

#### Entrepreneurship: Contemporary Perception of Muslim Women:

Previous entrepreneurship research argues that different cultures carry different beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of beginning a new enterprise (c.f., McGrath, MacMillan and Scheinberg, 1992). People from different cultures have different beliefs and values. While Islam is the most prevalent religion in the Middle East, not all Muslim/Islamic countries are identical in their interpretation of religious regulation

concerning the presence of women in open society. In the Middle East, although Islam is the base, not all Muslim countries are indistinguishable in terms of their concepts of social conventions and gender. Two examples of Islamic-based countries with different gender practices are Saudi Arabia and Iran.

In Saudi Arabia, women face many challenges. For example, Saudi women are not allowed to drive a car, nor do they have the freedom to socially interact in governmental institutions without a male guardian. Nonetheless, thousands of Saudi entrepreneurs are women and own businesses such as technology companies, beauty salons, jewelry shops, export and import companies, and furniture factories. Yet, they conduct their businesses from their own homes. Since, there are limitations to finding jobs in Saudi, most women stand up for their rights by starting businesses without a guardian.

On the other hand, Iran is a Muslim non-Arab country that gives women the right to drive and to vote. In addition, Iranian women are allowed to have their own business and can interact with men in a professional context. However, Iran still forbids women from leaving the country without their guardian's permission.

#### Threats to Female Entrepreneurship:

Cultural and religious practices directly shape the status of Saudi women (Abdul aziz. & Gardener, 2004; Mazawi, 2002). Their challenges are cultural, educational, or financial in nature (Abdul aziz. & Gardener, 2004; Mazawi, 2002). Other obstacles include acquiring suitable training (Calvert & Al-Shetaiwi, 2002), obtaining capital (Eid, 2005) and gender discrimination (Minkus-McKenna, 2009). Cultural and religious

practices directly shape the status of women in Saudi Arabia (Alsuwaigh, 1989; Mtango, 2004). Women are perceived as secondary to men in the social, economic, political, and religious spheres of life (Mtango, 2004). Transportation is an additional barrier to female entrepreneurship because of the male guardianship required of them in this capacity. Women in Saudi Arabia are subjected to a strict notion of male guardianship, known as “qawama,” based on Shari’a family law, which is characterized by many features of differential treatment that are discriminatory in the areas of marriage, divorce, and related personal matters. This notion has been extended to restrict women’s movements both within and outside Saudi Arabia. Within the country, women are banned from driving and are not permitted to travel without male family companions.

The World Bank (2007) studied social attitudes towards female entrepreneurship in the Middle East and African regions (MENA), and discovered that more males in the Middle East than in Asia had negative perceptions of working women (p.37). Table 1 illustrates the attitudes toward working women in the Middle East. These negative perceptions do not promote self-confidence or a willingness on the part of women to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.



Table 1: Attitudes toward working women in MENA

	Index of attitudes toward working women		Average score (Men and women)
	Women	Men	
Algeria	4.31	3.86	4.08
Egypt	3.89	3.47	3.68
Iran	4.22	4.25	4.23
Jordan	4.08	3.52	3.78
Morocco	4.26	3.81	4.06
Saudi Arabia	3.88	4.06	3.97
<i>Regional comparisons</i>			
Middle East and North Africa	4.11	3.83	3.97
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.39	4.32	4.37
Europe and Central Asia	4.34	4.27	4.31
South Asia	3.86	3.80	3.83
East Asia and the Pacific	4.22	4.19	4.22

Source: World Values Survey, 1999–2004, cited in World Bank (2007, p.38)

The 160th article of the Saudi work law, which was signed in 1969, disallows “mixed workplaces,” which places further limitations on women’s options regarding paid work, as they are discouraged from working in Westernized mixed workplaces. Nevertheless, this does concede the possibility for women to work outside the home, which is better than prohibiting them from working altogether (Le Renard, 2008, p.614).

There are a variety of constraints placed on women that affect their ability to upgrade production capacities on a continual basis. These constraints include: poor access to market information regarding technology and finance, poor linkages to support services, and an unfavorable policy and regulatory environment. These constraints are further compounded by the need to compete in an aggressive business environment with rapid technological changes and the globalization of production, trade, and financial flows (UNIDO, 2001).

Many of these constraints are shared by female and male entrepreneurs, but women entrepreneurs face additional obstacles due to deeply rooted discriminatory socio-cultural values and traditions embedded in the policy and legal environment and institutional support mechanisms. Women are unable to benefit from extended services and must struggle to overcome or circumvent discrimination in business circles (UNIDO, 2001).

Women's career choices are influenced by the overall governing environment and investment climate. This is of concern because of the particular barriers to doing business in the Middle East. Work preference and labor force participation are positively correlated—for both men and women—with indices for rule of law and control of corruption. For both men and women, work preference and its relationship to the perception of corruption is significant, with the correlation higher for women. This indicates that either societies where women are active participants in the economy, governance is better, or societies with greater inclusiveness and access to law and order are more open to women working, and create more opportunities for women to compete for jobs due to emphasis on qualifications and meritocracy. There are many reasons why women are disproportionately affected by corruption and poor governance. Those in government hiring positions could use their positions as a source of patronage rather than hiring only those with connections, a practice known in the Middle East as “wasta.”

Comprehensive studies on women-owned businesses in the Middle East suggest that there are no statistically significant gender-based differences in the investment environment. In addition, the same studies confirm that the business environment for start-ups is considerably more cumbersome in the Middle East for both genders as

compared with other middle-income countries in other regions, such as East Asia and Latin America (World Bank, 2003-2006). This difficult business start-up process discourages men and women equally from starting businesses in the Middle East. According to the findings of the World Bank Report (2003-2006), business laws appear to be gender neutral, but there are the laws outside the business community that hinder women in subtle ways. For example, a woman running a midsize company might need to travel overseas to sign contracts with clients ordering products from her company, but she cannot board an airplane without her husband's permission. These mores discourage women and stifle their ambitions to strive for careers and business ownership.

#### The Entrepreneurial Personality:

Mainstream literature on the subject associates entrepreneurial endeavors with an individual's locus of control. This idea may have some relevance to the predicament of Saudi entrepreneurial businesswomen. Locus of control is said to pertain to an "individual's belief in controlling their own destiny, called internal locus of control," as opposed to those who think external factors affect their lives, which is called external locus of control (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Entrepreneurs are self-reliant with a high internal locus of control (McClelland, 1961 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Entrepreneurial outcomes are uncertain. Individuals who are afraid of risk are not successful entrepreneurs (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Two reasons for aversion to risk are a lack of self-confidence and poor knowledge about business practices and markets (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Several studies examine the association between the tendency toward entrepreneurship and individual locus of control. Borland

undertook an empirical research in 1972 with a sampling of 375 business school students, and the findings show that students who want to start their own business have a higher internal locus of control (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). In 1975, Brockhous replicated the same findings in another sampling (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). These studies all conclude that entrepreneurs feel they have greater social power (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102).

The existing literature gives a comprehensive review of what motivates women to become entrepreneurs, yet lacks definitive conclusions regarding the underlying motivators. Some studies cite “autonomy, independence, education, family security, job dissatisfaction, frustration, deployment, boredom in previous jobs, or even divorce are the factors that motivate women to become entrepreneurs” (Sexton & Vasper, 1982; and Brush, 1986 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Other studies stress personal characteristics, life-path circumstances, and environmental factors as predominant motivators for women entrepreneurs (Bartol & Martin, 1998 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). In 2000, Parboteeach mentions factors that integrate the entrepreneur’s background, personality, and environment (Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102), and others cite profit and innovation motivate women to start businesses (Carland et al. 1984 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102),as well as flexibility to administer dual responsibilities in a way that office jobs cannot offer (Zellner, 1994 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). The issue of the “glass ceiling” motivates women to become entrepreneurs, as they seek the challenge of breaking this glass ceiling (Familoni, 2007 cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Roggenkamp and White (1998) studied nurses who became entrepreneurs, noting they are motivated by flexibility and empowerment

(cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Mcatavey (2002) states “aligning with values, regaining excitement, being in charge, advancing oneself and fulfilling a lifelong goal contributed to women’s decisions to start their own businesses” (cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Ljunggren and Kolvereid (1996) found that women give autonomy as the motivation for engagement in business and entrepreneurship (cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). They did not observe any gender differences with regard to challenge, risk, or profitability.

Dhaliwal and Kangis (2006) found that some women’s businesses were related to hobbies and reflect traditional gender roles. For instance, two survey respondents were beauticians who wanted to export Eastern techniques and materials to the West, while another respondent owned a catering company serving Asian meals for weddings and parties (cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102).

These findings support the idea that some businesses are still related to gender roles (cited in Zeidan & Bahrami, 2011, p.102). Previous work experience also impacts the types of businesses women pursue.

#### Opportunities for Education and Social Empowerment:

King and Prime Minister Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud has been actively promoting and financing the expansion of the Saudi higher education system. He has made several reforms designed to improve educational opportunities for women, one of which is the Seventh Development Plan. This increased the political rights for women. In September 2011, the King agreed that women could run for office and vote in future municipal elections. However, women still cannot serve as full members of the advisory

Consultative Council. The Seventh Development Plan was designed to increase employment for women in the private sector and to make improvements to Technical and Vocational Training.

Saudi Arabia begins to develop five-year national development plans since 1970. The purpose of these plans is to identify development trend in the Kingdom for the following five years. In spite of the variation of the trends, plans, requirement of time stage and its data, and in spite of the structural change in the national economy and its requirement, these plans link a unified strategy. This strategy includes three main themes: respect for religious values, preserve the national security, and stable the economic and social development.

The main weakness of the literature is the omission of studies that would point toward solutions as to how businesses and institutions can improve social biases and empower women. Studies do not measure the relationship between entrepreneurship and independence and social power. Instead, research studies focus on describing the advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship specific to women, examining why women enter into business, but they do not empirically measure the association between business and social power and autonomy. Some studies do indicate greater flexibility as a byproduct of owning a business (Dechant & Lamky, 2005; Kaye & Hassan, 2010).

## SUMMARY

The strength of the examined literature was in the revelation of motivational factors and barriers women entrepreneurs encounter in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the context of these businesses. Researchers use exploratory studies to

understand how and why women go into business in Middle Eastern countries and in Saudi Arabia. Common methodologies are surveys and interviews. These studies find that women engage in business because of numerous factors, stressing autonomy and social power. Women want to control their own resources and time, which they can achieve only through entrepreneurship. If they own their companies, they can update existing skills and knowledge, and pursue other talents and goals. If they apply to outside firms, they may be ineligible because of a mismatch between their skill set and the requirements of an employer, or they might be hired but cannot relocate or travel far from home. Owning a business enables women to actively participate in the economic sphere. As entrepreneurs, women gain more access to social resources, whether financial or business-related. For example, increased social resources can facilitate and extend the capacity to tap into additional financial resources, or expand a business through a social network.

The relevant literature demonstrates that cultural and socio-economic conditions as well as institutions, impact female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia. It is important to underscore that Saudi women encounter cultural barriers and personal challenges as entrepreneurs. Women who come from conservative families are hindered from engaging in business, and some families engage women in business precisely because of their conservative attitudes that women should not have to work for firms requiring them to travel to distant places. Financial reasons also derail women from becoming entrepreneurs, especially if they are poor or do not have access to existing credit facilities. Poor socio-economic conditions contribute to the lack of proper education or training, which negatively impacts chances for employment.

The main weakness of the literature is the omission of studies that would point toward solutions as to how businesses and institutions can improve social biases and empower women. Studies do not measure the relationship between entrepreneurship and independence and social power. Instead, research studies focus on describing the advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship specific to women, examining why women enter into business, but they do not empirically measure the association between business and social power and autonomy. Admittedly this is would be difficult to measure. Some studies do indicate greater flexibility as a byproduct of owning a business (Dechant & Lamky, 2005; Kayed & Hassan, 2010).Some studies focus on the motivating factors, such as autonomy and social power, for women entering into business. Zeidan and Bahrami (2011) mention studies that investigate why women become entrepreneurs in the GCC. These studies highlight the reasons women go into business, but they do not measure if business ownership truly contribute to changes in perceptions of power and independence.

The review of this literature indicates a gap in the studies. Future research should assess and measure the relationship between entrepreneurship and independence and social power for women. This paper specifically aims to understand how business ownership can improve women's autonomy and social power in Saudi Arabia. It will use a case study research design to examine the private businesses of women so that the association between business, independence, and social power can be studied and established.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In the preceding section, an introduction to the proposed area of research was discussed. It included a description of the study's research problem, the purpose of the research, and the research objectives that will be considered during data analysis. This section will describe the methodology proposed for this research project. Included in the section will be a description of the study setting, proposed research design, study sample, and proposed data collection methods, procedures, and analysis efforts.

In this study, entrepreneurial women in Alkhuber, Saudi Arabia were interviewed about their professional experiences. Saudi Arabia was chosen for this study for many reasons. One of the major issues in Saudi Arabia is the Western perception of what is considered the extreme religiosity of Saudi people. In Saudi Arabia, many people tend to pass on their traditional values as religious teachings.

In Saudi, unemployment among the young generation is "more acute" than the unemployment rate in other groups. Among people 20 to 24 years of age, unemployment has reached 28.0%, and among people aged 25 to 29 years, unemployment is as high as 14.3%. Saudi Arabia's national unemployment rate in 2009 stood at 10.5%, while the total number of unemployed people reached 615,249 in 2012. A study conducted by Booz and Co. (YEAR) for global management and strategy consultation showed that 78.3% of female university graduates in Saudi Arabia are unemployed, including over 1,000 Ph.D. holders.

## Research Design:

This research is concerned about Saudi female entrepreneurs in Alkhuber, Saudi Arabia. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with participants using a structured interview guide. Though the researcher provided a format, interviewers were expected to expand upon their answers at the end of the interview. The length of interviews ranged from twenty minutes to one hour; all the interviews were audio recorded, translated from Arabic and transcribed. Interviews were conducted at their homes and in coffee shop near to their work place . The aim of this research is to define the challenges that Saudi women encounter as they establish, manage, and expand their businesses, how they overcome these barriers, and the relationship between their background training and their success in business.

Subsequent chapters will address how such barriers can be subverted by examining how social factors such as education, religion, and tradition act as barriers to female entrepreneurs in the first place.

In the first quarter of 2012, the Ministry of Trade and Industry reported 43,257 registered businesses in Saudi Arabia, and 447 of those businesses were registered in Alkhuber. This was a 200 percent increase from 2011, when 148 businesses were registered in Alkhuber, for a difference of 299 additional registered businesses. This research project is comprised of nine women. Most of the interviewed women work in the fields of jewelry design, photography, or marketing.

The researcher initially sent surveys to 342 businesswomen via Survey Monkey.com , and to ensure that questions were answered completely and accurately, participants were informed that the results of their survey forms would be kept confidential. The participants completed the survey either online via email or in person.

#### Target Population and Data Collection Procedures:

The businesswomen included in this study are members of the Businesswomen's Center at the Saudi Trade Chamber in Alkhuber (BWC) who met the designation of 'entrepreneur' and were listed in the Alkhuber Chamber of Commerce database in the summer of 2012. The women participating in the survey are from Alkhuber, which is located in the eastern region of the country and is a major commercial center in Saudi Arabia. Due to its location in the Gulf region, Alkhuber enjoys free trade with other Arabic Gulf countries and has greater exposure to the world at large. Foreign companies, such as European and American corporations, target Alkhuber to establish businesses due to the oil industry. The existence of such world-class companies creates an extremely competitive marketplace that provides a rich climate for opportunity, encourages emerging businessmen and women, and provides the necessary support, knowledge, and resources to help them start and manage their own businesses. Alkhuber is a massive urban city in the Eastern frontier of Saudi Arabia. The city is located along the Arabia Gulf coastline. Such attributes make this city a hub of commercial activities in this nation and also in the larger Middle East region. The city has a population of about half a million. The city is part of the larger Dammam metropolitan region. The surrounding area provides adequate support for the city's robust commercial activities. It serves as an opening to the eastern frontier of Saudi Arabia due to its strategic location.

I chose to undertake my research in this city primarily because it is my hometown. As such, I felt at ease when conducting my research. Additionally, I am well versed with the city and its activities. Alkhuber, a coastal town, attracts many tourists because of its weather, beaches, culture, and hotels. Therefore, tourism is a key industry. Numerous modern hotels host guests from nations across the world. Tourism requires infrastructural support such as roads and airports. The [King Fahd International Airport](#) is approximately fifty kilometers from Alkhuber and provides easy access to this urban center. Furthermore, the Dammam highway provides access by road to the city. Initially, Alkhuber was founded as a trading center for merchants, which remains an important aspect of the city today. Alkhuber is a preferred location for various multinational entities in the manufacturing and mining sector. This city is characterized by large shopping complexes that serve both tourists and residents. Overall, Alkhuber is a business hub where many of the local residents have invested, including the businesswomen who are key to this research. For the reasons listed above, I chose Alkhuber as the target sample for this survey.

#### Data Analysis:

Once relevant data were gathered after conducting face-to-face interviews with research participants last summer in 2012, the researcher used a narrative analysis methodology because it can be applied to investigate and to study any piece of writing or occurrences of recorded communication. The participants' responses in interview sessions were recorded in this study.

Participants' experiences and perspectives were explored in this study using narrative analysis of the life stories of contemporary eminent women living in Alkhober. The participants were seven women who have achieved success and peer recognition in various fields including jewelry retail, furniture, and other fields that will be mentioned in the data analysis. Four prominent themes emerged from an analysis of the interview data. In their stories of achievement, the main factors included: self-reliance, the superiority of their work, and their interdependence with others, including family members and coworkers. In addition, every woman talked about egalitarianism its importance in the home and workplace. The voices of these women confirmed and extended the knowledge base about the course of talent development for women and their meaning of success.

Further, in order to place emphasis on the different research findings extracted from the research results, excerpts from the responses of the participants will be incorporated in the study. Questions asked in the interview included topics such as entrepreneurial motives, entrepreneurial difficulties, and success rate of businesses founded by the participants. These areas of inquiry pertain to how women in Saudi Arabia start, run, manage, and maintain their businesses and entrepreneurial ventures, despite the evident restrictions and limitations imposed by the Saudi Arabian government in terms of the type of business activities owned and managed by Saudi women.

### Challenges of Gathering Data :

The first obstacle encountered was the limited responses. Out of 342 surveys, only nine responded. This was somewhat foreseeable because in Saudi Arabia, people are very sensitive about privacy and people do not feel comfortable sharing personal information with others. Second, people in Saudi hesitate to share information about activities in which they do not participate. Third, in general, some Saudis are reluctant to engage with a researcher because they believe that a researcher needs a permit to conduct research from political authorities. Finally, most of the entrepreneurs believed that the researcher might steal their ideas and methods of their success to present to the public, causing them to lose their advantage or their uniqueness in the market. Lack of response and therefore reliable data was a major obstacle facing the researcher. This appears to be a common experienced of many researchers who conduct studies in Saudi Arabia. With these challenges and limitations, completing the study within the allotted timeframe was difficult because it coincided with Ramadan, the holy month for Muslims, when most people prefer not to communicate and spend their time praying and fasting. On the other hand, Saudi entrepreneurs often arrange for their annual holiday to coincide with the summer school holiday to escape the heat.

In undertaking my research, I experienced numerous challenges. First, as mentioned many of the respondents were unwilling to participate in the study. In the research design, interviews were used as a means of amassing more in depth data. Moreover, the study aimed to utilize phone calls and emails to gather data. Despite the elaborate data collection methods, the research was hindered by lack of cooperation.

I sent surveys to 342 business women by using SurveyMonkey.com, but only nine women answered the online survey and seven women agreed to an interview with me. In the face-to-face interviews, the respondents were reluctant to provide accurate details about themselves and their businesses. They felt that the researcher would utilize the information for self-interest. Additionally, other respondents were unwilling to share information because they did not seem to trust the interviewer. They had reservations about the interviewer's real agenda. Due to the above events, creativity was required. Visiting some of the entrepreneurs who were unwilling to reply to emails and text messages had significant success. Some of the businesswomen who had previously not been interested, agreed to be interviewed. Nonetheless, some of the respondents were still unwilling to participate in a face-to-face interview. In light of the above details, the researcher should utilize diverse methods of collecting data in future research. While it was a certainly a challenge to only receive nine of survey responses out of 342 sent out, the lack of response and hesitation exhibited during interviews speak to the cultural norms of Saudi society. In the United State one could expect more responses and perhaps more openness in discussions of women's entrepreneurship experiences. The norms of privacy in Saudi Arabia are aspects to consider while doing research in the Middle East.

## SUMMARY

This study was designed to offer insight into the issues faced by female entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia and in Alkhober in particular. Researcher strategies were chosen so as to respect the many concerns described above (in particular women's desire for confidentiality). This research has practical applications for government and non-government agencies, financial institutions, and other related business development agencies, and it offers recommendations for effective policies and appropriate strategies to motivate Saudi women to become entrepreneurs.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

This section discusses the results that are relevant to various study topics incorporated in each of the questions asked in the face-to-face interviews. Some primary themes and concepts were then drawn from responses given by research participants and subsequently organized in a manner that would align each answer in the most descriptive manner that was conducive to individual analysis. Selections of participants' responses are also included in order to emphasize the significance of the research findings. While some of these women were hesitant to speak with me at first, after visiting a couple of them they agreed to an interview. The female entrepreneurs operated a variety of different businesses ranging from furniture and jewelry stores, to real estate and finance to "beauty salons" and bakeries.

#### **Research Participant #1**

Participant 1 owns a jewelry business in which she develops the jewelry designs and patterns and uses a jewelry-making business/factory in order to produce her designs, and then sells them on the Internet. She cannot own her own store because Saudi law prohibits women from owning their own stores; in addition, rent is high and she receives no support from her husband, and Saudi laws require women to have a male guardian. She does not come from a wealthy family, and her educational background is college level with an emphasis on history. She chose this type of business because she is skilled in the arts. Lack of jobs in Saudi Arabia propelled her to start her own jewelry business, as well as her belief that she is unique in this field because the jewelry industry in Saudi

is dominated by men. She agreed to talk to me because she believed that participating in this research project would have external benefits to her and to her business, maybe by word-of-mouth advertising and/or references.

#### Research Participant #2

Research participant #2 runs a technology import company; she brings tech gadgets and tools from countries such as China to Saudi Arabia to sell to the Saudi market. She has obtained permission from her male guardian, her brother, and is allowed to travel outside Saudi. She travels to countries such as China to purchase technology with the purpose of importing it back to Saudi. She does not own her own store because the goods she is selling will invariably expose her to interactions with men who are not members of her immediate family. Instead, she sells her imported products on the Internet through an e-commerce website. She comes from a wealthy family and her education background is college level, where she studied interior design. Previous to her entrepreneurial efforts, she was employed at a bank as a branch manager for twelve years. The chief motivating factor for her to launch her own business and Internet store was her passion and desire for independence, self-reliance, and time to continue her educational and academic ambitions.

#### Research Participant #3

Research Participant #3 has a business focused on furniture design, although she did not actually start the business and instead took it over from her father. She has managed the business for seven years. When she took over the company from her father, she wanted to change the business title and registration to her own name, although this posed some issues: the furniture production sector is located in the industrial part of

Alkhober, where no Saudi women are allowed to go. Thus, although it is not against the law, the bureaucratic structure of the Saudi government prevented her from obtaining a business license in her own name, despite her indication that she was an owner of the business and not an operation manager and/or employee who actually needed to be present in the industrial part of the city where the furniture factory is located. As a result, she appointed a lawyer to serve as her power of attorney/representative to run the day-to-day affairs of the operations. She graduated from college majoring in Arab literature. She agreed to take part in the research project because I had social connections with many of the participants, which allowed you to overcome trust issues.

#### Research Participant #4

Participant 4 owns what can be considered a beauty salon according to American definitions. However, according to Saudi regulation, people cannot own beauty-related businesses because it is against the law for women to manipulate their appearances through the use of makeup, etc. She has registered her beauty salon as a tailoring shop for the past nine years. She attained high school education only. Her entrepreneurial efforts were motivated by her lack of education and also by the lack of other job opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia. She does not communicate with the global market because her business is mostly local, and her advertising is done by her clients' word-of-mouth recommendations.

#### Research Participant #5

This participating works in real estate and owns property that includes land and the buildings on that land. She attended high school but not college, and she is not from a wealthy background. She was motivated to found her own business because there were

no other employment opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia. The location of her business is the city of Alkhuber. She uses the Internet and other communication methods to communicate with the global market.

#### Research Participant #6

This participant graduated from college as an economics major, and her business pertains to finance and investment. It was initially under her father's management, but she has now created her own investment company. She comes from a wealthy family. She started her business because she wanted to separate the operations of her father's business to have her own independence. She uses the Internet and other communication methods to engage with the global market. She agreed to participate in the research project because she is open-minded and wished to express her views and expertise.

#### Research Participant #7

This participant graduated from college where she studied biology, and she is not from a wealthy family. Her business is a bakery, specifically, a cupcake bakery. She started her own business because of the lack of job prospects for women in Saudi Arabia. Initially, she started the business in her own home due to high rent costs, but after six years of running her own business, she eventually opened her own bakery in Alkhuber. She serves only local customers, so she does not need to enter the global market.

#### Entrepreneurial Motives:

One recurring theme evident in all responses provided by participants in the research was that the motivating factor for women to engage in entrepreneurial activities were of financial and non-financial nature; some of these factors include but are not

limited to employment independence (women expressed the desire to work for themselves as opposed to someone else), limited job opportunities in the wide employment/job markets, residual income, flexibility of working hours, and encouragements from family. It should be noted that it was imperative to the success of this research project to carefully consider the participant selection process; the research was designed towards those women whom had already been in the entrepreneurial environment for at least two years as that timeframe would have been indicative of note, not only due to more business experience but also a greater understanding of the inner dynamics of business in Saudi Arabia and how it relates to women. Table 2 shows the period of time that participants were in some entrepreneurial setting/environment. According to research findings five out of seven women interviewed indicated that the chief motivating factors for their entrepreneurial enterprise were their dreams, interest and passion for business. For the remaining two participants, entrepreneurial ambitions were guided by external factors such as lack of job opportunities for women in the Saudi employment market.

Table 2. Number of years the business has been operating.

Number of years	Response Count
1	2
3	1
5	0
7	3
10 and up	3

It should be noted that the distinguishing marker between the prominence of the ways in which the interviewed women got into business and the factors that led them to launch an entrepreneurial enterprise, converge in the intersection of that which is possible for women in Saudi and that to which they aspire by way of hopes and dreams. The research seems to indicate a three dimensional paradigm of motivating factors encouragement and support from peers and family, financial motivations ranging from desire for more residual income and/or lack of opportunities at the workplace, and the desire to break-away from the restrictive environment in which women have to live in Saudi Arabia.

The desire for starting their own business split rather evenly along the three dimensions where one group of women indicated support from family as their encouragement for business, another the desire for higher income and the third indicated the desire to pursue their own dreams and ambitions outside the restrictive norms of the Saudi society. The lack of job opportunities aspect of the entrepreneurial decision making process for women in Saudi has been made rather worse by the grim statistic where some 1.6 million of women who had graduated from various educational institutions whom were not then able to find any employment opportunities in the immediate years of their graduations. The high unemployment rate that exists for women in Saudi Arabia had an inverse effect in that it ended-up serving as a strong motivating factor for women to break away from the bondage of unemployment by wishing to entertain entrepreneurial ambitions. Another deciding factor indicated by women who participated in the research project had to do with the initial capital and funding that ultimately rendered the size,

scope and type of the entrepreneurial enterprise. Participants had indicated that an important source of capital for launching the entrepreneurial enterprise was the entrepreneur herself; it was important, perhaps by way of long-established cultural norms, that the entrepreneur provided some of the funding and capital for business as it was a sign indicating the persons seriousness and accountability; followed by funding provided by the entrepreneur herself, other sources of financing included familial support and other financial resources such as bank loans and/or programs that may exist for women who want to become more financially independent. In the research project, six of the nine participants indicated that they had launched their enterprise through self-financing while the other two participants noted that their families had played a significant role in financing their businesses. One participant also noted that the availability of financial assistance programs such as bank loans and other programs were also instrumental in their business being launched. Table 3 indicates some financing sources that have been cited by research participants.

Table 3 indicates some financing sources that have been cited by research participants.

Answer Options	Response Count
Self-financed	6
Family	2
Bank loan	0
Program loans	1
Other	1

### Entrepreneurial Difficulties:

For a woman who is involved in some or other entrepreneurial enterprise, the task and the experience can be inspirational and exciting as it can indicate a level of personal accomplishment and achievement. In cultures such as Saudi Arabia, a successfully running business can bring one social recognition and eventually result in the positive modification of one's social and economic status. However, it should also be stated that start-up and entrepreneurial enterprises are often complex and challenging to the entrepreneur in ways previously not thought of. Having the skills set to gain knowledge and understanding on the challenges and problems that might be encountered in starting a business could likely assist an individual to prepare for the unforeseeable and help in preventing common business pitfalls. Considering the data obtained from this research project, seven respondents stressed that they experienced major and minor difficulties in starting their own businesses, while the other two participants were not quite as affected by challenges and obstacles during an entrepreneurial experience. Examining responses regarding the experienced difficulties in starting their business, participants noted major difficulties with allocation of human resources, high rents and difficulty in dealing with the government agencies tasked with entrepreneurial opportunities.

Finding the right and appropriate local talent and human resources poses significant difficulties for starting a business for women in Saudi Arabia. Human resources are the driving force that keeps a business running. Thus, it is important to hire the best and suitable employees in order to achieve its core goals. In Saudi Arabia,



finding local talent for running the business is quite a difficult responsibility that entrepreneurs undertake. As stated by participants in the research project:

“The major problem is finding local talent that will fit for the job. Most of the Saudis are more absorbed by large companies here in Saudi, which really is a difficult for us entrepreneurs with small to medium businesses” (originally stated in Arabic language and transcribed into English)

Moreover, one participant emphasized that availability of female talent is limited. This was further corroborated by one of the participant’s responses, stating:

“It is hard to find women fit for the job mainly because women are underrepresented in the labor industry. In my case, I need female candidates for specific jobs in my business. And somehow, the technical skills were not accessible to most of female candidates I interviewed during the hiring process. Thus, this is really a difficulty for entrepreneurs in Saudi.”  
(originally stated in Arabic language and transcribed into English)

Another difficulty highlighted by the collected data is high shop rents, which one of the respondents highly stressed. However, the primary obstacles in starting a business for women entrepreneurs is the difficulty of maintaining and processing the affairs of the entrepreneurial enterprise in conjunction with governmental agencies tasked with dealing with small business and entrepreneurial affairs. Moreover, certain regulations in Saudi require that women entrepreneurs must have male representatives to deal directly with the government agencies. Three of the participants indicated the stressful and overwhelming

nature of difficulties pertaining to such regulations. Below are the responses (translated to English language) of three participants responding to this issue:

“It is difficult to deal with government agencies because it has been a regulation to have a male representative for the business. It is hard for me, as a woman, to be able to perform such tasks myself”

“I experienced difficulty specifically in checking various specialties in government departments.”

“It is difficult to talk to certain government agencies such as Ministry of Commerce and the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and others, mainly because businesses here in Saudi must have a male representative to represent the business in talking with government officials.”

Because of the difficult nature of conducting business with government agencies, legal obstacles have also been encountered by the participants at the beginning of the entrepreneurial process. These included difficulties in registering the company, difficulties in persuading officials of the need to quit and pursue every legal topic independently for example getting the registration for business and obtaining permits takes time and effort. In addition, transportation also posed difficulty in starting a business, where respondents had difficulty in getting a driver in a situation where there is no public transport, and particularly, women are not allowed to drive.

### Entrepreneurial Success:

Although different difficulties and challenges in starting a business by women entrepreneurs have impacted the process of the start-up as well as the operations of the business, several businesses owned by Saudi women have been successful in some ways. This notion was supported by the responses of the participants, answering the question in relation to the success of the business. Table 4 shows the breakdown of responses illustrating the prevalence of success in businesses for women in Saudi.

Table 4: Success rate of businesses in Saudi Arabia.

Answer Options	Response Count
Very successful	0
Successful	8
Unsuccessful	1
Very unsuccessful	0

Of all the participants, eight were able to say that their business was successful while one stated that it was unsuccessful. The success of the business of the eight respondents was explained in profits gained by their business, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Profit percentage of business owned by the participants

Profit percentage	Response Count
0	0
>0-25%	5
>25-50%	4
>50-75%	0
>75-100%	0

It should also be noted that factors that determine the success of a business based on the data obtained from this research are proper training programs, managerial and personal traits of business owners, proper funding and educational background. Training programs were highly useful for the participants in managing and running the business. Responses included ideas relative to gained experience and culture of the educational courses received, training for qualification for the work which helped build confidence and somehow adding value to the products offered to the market. In addition, according to the respondents, important personality traits that Saudi business women should have for successful entrepreneurship include:

- Effective skills sets pertaining to managing the business, particularly in dealing with one's human resources
- Creativity and innovation

- Persistence, determination and hard work in facing business problems and challenges.
- Self-confidence.
- Cultural and identity respect including effective balancing of work between family responsibilities and work tasks.
- Have abilities that incorporate a great emphasis on product selection and customer satisfaction.

Educational background also plays a great role in the success of businesses in Saudi, most especially for women. When it comes to the level of education achieved by Saudi women entrepreneur, 66.7% of women surveyed revealed that level of education was very effective and useful for the establishment of an entrepreneurial business, both in technical and non-technical fields. Another aspect is the financial resources as an effective contributor to the success of a business. Supplemental financial support from external sources also contributes to the success of the business. Responses were identified exemplifying an approach in paving the way for attaining business success, as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Supplemental financial resources.

Answer Options	Response Count
Additional Job	1
Relative (father or husband)	4
Another business	1
Loan	0
I have no other financial support ,only this business	2
Another (please specify)	2

Moreover, the success of the business isn't only measured in terms of profitable and within a defined set of financial considerations, but within the context of the impact it has on creating social independence. Table 7 shows the percentage of responses distinguishing the sense of social independence.

Table 7: Number of response emphasizing owning business provides sense of social independence.

Answer Options	Response Count
Yes	8
No	1

According to research participants, in the scenario where an entrepreneur is economically independent, her independence then provides a way to be the sole arbiters in determining the viability of the business and what is and isn't conducive to the

profitability and success of the enterprise. In addition to financial and business independence, productivity and business achievement and the positive effect it has on women's participation in their communities is seen as an encouraging and positive factor as oppose to the traditional stigma of unproductively that is often attached to Saudi women. Moreover, women entrepreneurs are then able to gain more economic freedom that then leads to credibility and respect within society.

The research tackles the comparison between women entrepreneurs of Alkhober, Saudi Arabia who own businesses and women who do not. It also focuses on identifying and defining how financial independence leads to women's political engagement in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the city of Alkhober. The researcher has chosen the women of eastern region of Saudi Arabia, in Alkhoeber, primarily because Alkhoeber is a commercial area.

Based on the data gathered through survey-questionnaire, the researcher has learned that the motivational factors that critically induce women to engage in entrepreneurship were of both financial and non-financial nature; the primary motives that can be drawn from the responses include those related to lack of work independence, limited job opportunities, additional profit/income, flexibility of work or working hours, and encouragement from others. The data shows that 66.7 percent of the respondents answered that women who wished to launch their business were then also the sole investors of said business. Other responses included investment and financial support from family (22.2 percent) and program loans (11.1 percent). Respondents also stated that the inability to find appropriate and right local talents and resources for their business

acted as constraints in starting a business. Another negative factor for the viability and success of the entrepreneurial effort is the high cost of shop rentals and legal obstacles in starting a business that include difficulties ranging from the registration of the company to difficulties in dealing with business officials as well as the arduous process of obtaining permits for the business. Apart from this, transportation is also considered as a hindrance since women are not allowed to drive and finding appropriate (in accordance with business and/or cultural requirements) drivers were also cited as a major obstacle.

However, despite all the listed difficulties and constraints experienced in the process of establishing the entrepreneurial venture by those interviewed, majority of those questioned still consider their business a success. It should also be stated that the factors that determine the success of a business based on the data obtained from this research are proper training programs, managerial and personal characteristics of women managing the business, and proper funding and educational background. It should be noted that education also plays a very important role for Saudi women since 66.7% of research participants revealed that level of education was very effective and useful for the success of their business, both from technical and non-technical perspective. Moreover, Saudi women stated that business does not only need to be financially profitable in order to be considered a successful enterprise, but also needed to have a positive impact in the community as well as the establishing of the business owner as an active and successful member of society.



## SUMMARY

The women interviewed in this research project in many ways are representative of the general population of women in Saudi in that to the extent that they are successful is dependent on a myriad of factors ranging from familial support to financial standing, etc. A caveat is that most of the women who participated in this study were either from wealthy or middle class backgrounds. One could perhaps suggest that these women are also different from the general population in that they are more ambitious and more progressive in their mindset and aggressive in pursuing their goals and dreams than women who remain trapped in the general conservative dynamic that exists for women in Saudi Arabia.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this study relates to the creativity of these Saudi women. What all of the participants have in common is that their success seems to be due in large part to their resourcefulness and creativity. These qualities appeared particularly important to actually being able to open and operate their businesses. Saudi women are limited by law and face serious repercussions if they are found to be breaking these laws. Instead of breaking the law, these women have found interesting ways around them. For example, Participant #4 owns a “tailoring shop” yet under American definitions it would be considered a beauty salon. As altering one’s appearance is not legal, a more suiting category had to be used to label the business. Several of the women were in many ways hindered by having to have a male guardian run their business or own their business and or property. Women found ingenious ways around this. One participant employed a male lawyer to act as the owner on paper while

she in reality ran the business. Finally we see that perhaps one of the most powerful tools employed by these women was their use of the Internet. As women are forbidden to interact with men (not related to them) and this also involves selling products or services. While some women are the purchasers of such products, in Saudi society it is frequently men who do the purchasing. Utilizing the Internet allows for these female entrepreneurs to provide goods and services (such as buying and selling real estate, offering financial services, selling furniture or jewelry) to both male and female consumers. This in part could account for their success in that they are able to interact with a wider marketplace, selling goods and services to both Saudi men and women and also beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia via the Internet.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

In a society such as Saudi Arabia that has very conservative, if not limiting, views of gender, for women to achieve more autonomy and political rights the likes of those naturally enjoyed by men is a huge cultural transformation and, apparently, one that requires a gradual shift in values and beliefs, as well as, to a certain extent, conscious effort and political will. Unlike in other countries, specifically Western ones, where gender inequality is tantamount to discrimination that is both legally and socially sanctioned, the same cannot be said in the case of Saudi women. Although, with such deep cultural and religious roots, it is also not fair for the outside world to condemn the same as blatantly oppressive and derogatory to the rights of women. Eons of political, social, and religious beliefs and practices have so ingrained such practice of women not being allowed into the social realm which includes, among others, the establishment of business that the same has become the known and accepted norm. Even women themselves who have been raised and reared in this kind of environment—and without such external influences as Western women’s liberation—may easily accept their limited roles in society. It is simply the natural and expected behavior for them. Many women in Saudi thus, still lack sufficient political clout as well as autonomy.

Given the aforementioned situation, it is only expected that women face more impediments and challenges in the world of business and entrepreneurship, an environment that has been traditionally ruled by male businessmen. Nevertheless, this

research based on survey data and in depth interviews with female entrepreneurs registered with the Women's Business Center in Alkhober, Saudi Arabia, has shown that this is not impossible. As Saudi culture is less openly communicative, some of these women were hesitant at first to disclose aspects such how they founded their businesses, the challenges they have experienced, and what factors aided in success, the information they provided has been helpful to identifying successful entrepreneurship strategies. Key findings from this research suggest that women were able to achieve this success due to creativity and enterprising means of getting around cultural and legal barriers. Examples of such enterprising activity includes: re-categorizing the label of a business (from beauty salon to tailoring shop), hiring a lawyer to act as the legal owner/operator of a business, and most importantly using the far-reaching power of the Internet for both marketing and avoiding direct interactions with men. Findings from this study also suggest that women from higher status backgrounds with more financial support are also much more likely to operate and be successful in business endeavors. Several of the women interviewed had borrowed money from male family members. Without this option, for these women, opening a business would have been nearly impossible.

These women were motivated to open their own businesses by a lack of employment opportunities as well as a desire for a higher wage or also a means to fulfill their dreams. Several of these women displayed a high level of self-confidence and self-reliance, something, which is not commonly displayed by the majority of Saudi women. Running their businesses also provided a source of increased self-confidence and self-reliance. These female entrepreneurs did face the usual business challenges of paying

high rent or obtaining skilled employees. However unlike women in Western countries, they also faced additional cultural and legal obstacles such as they were not allowed to deal directly with government agencies and required male drivers to travel about the country.

The subsequent paragraphs of this chapter aim to place the issue of female entrepreneurship within the larger context of women who live predominantly in Islamic countries and the issues they face in establishing and maintaining their own enterprises. On the one hand, it is important to realize the notable improvements in the status and well-being of women in Saudi Arabia, especially after certain traditional restrictions against them have been finally relaxed; yet on the other hand, it is equally important to keep an eye on the continuing struggles and barriers they face. Finally, the study concludes by offering solutions or recommendations as to how the conditions of women may be improved, not only within the context of their pursuit of business and other economic undertakings, but also within the larger contexts of self-independence and political power, although these latter subjects remain contentious issues that are deeply related to the pervading religious and social norms in the country.

#### Women Entrepreneurs in Saudi: Breaking Through the Barriers To Become Significant Economic and Social Contributors

Recent reports have confirmed that the Middle East is becoming a playing field for women entrepreneurs and that the women are slowly becoming key drivers of businesses in the region (How Women Entrepreneurs Are Driving Business in the Middle

East, 2010). The Middle East has undergone dramatic changes through the decades, starting with its economic boom and then its exposure to Western ideas and behaviors. How this trend will proceed depends on the acceptance by the people in general of women being in charge and attaining more autonomy and power. Indeed, Saudi women are now increasingly manifesting an inclination not to mention, an ability, to establish and to run their own businesses. Despite laws hindering women's opening and operating businesses, some women have proven creative and resourceful, often using the Internet as powerful tool for success. One often recounted success stories is that of Rima Bint Bandar Al Saud, who is the CEO of Alfa International and Al Hama LLC, two leading corporations that sell luxury items. She is also an owner of a luxury spa whose primary clientele are female consumers. Rima Al Saud avers that women being unwelcome to do business in Saudi is already a thing of the past, an antiquated notion, so to speak. Rima, however, is a Saudi princess and therefore, enjoyed certain privileges and economic stability that may not have been available to her female peers. This is very important to note. Saudi women from less advantaged background would not have access to the same resources or oftentimes the freedoms that come with these resources. This trend was also seen within this particular study.

Perhaps one of the notable improvements in the plight of Saudi women is the extension to their access to better education, given that king Abdullah's government , has sought to enhance the quality of education and literacy of the Saudi populace, including its women (Minkus-McKenna, 2009, p.\_9). The improvement of educational quality is imperative in an increasingly competitive globalized world, where progress and

advancement are mainly fuelled by knowledge, information, and the ability to develop new technologies. Thus, despite its precious natural wealth of oil wells and reserves, Saudi will be at risk of falling behind developed countries if its citizens are not well educated and its growing industries will have to rely on input of foreign technologies and labor. That the educational improvements have been extended to women is positive because it helps realize the potential of women as part of the Saudi workforce. The ironic fact, however, is that despite this campaign for a wider inclusion of women in the educational system, including higher education institutions, women still comprise a meager 15 percent of the Saudi workforce (Vaid, 2011, p. 446).). This does not reflect positively on any purported positive effect of education on the political standing of women.

Moreover, the hopeful effect of women being faced with fewer barriers to enter business is that they also gradually become part of larger societal processes. Instead of being merely relegated to the domestic realm—a role that does not give them much opportunity to have a voice and to participate in society—women entrepreneurs become more connected to current social issues and become important stakeholders in the policies implemented by the government, particularly those that involve the conduct of business or the running of the economy.

### Despite the Progress: The Challenges Ahead:

Worldwide, women entrepreneurs and business leaders still comprise the minority of entrepreneurial and business leaders. This indicates a global pattern of women participating less frequently than men in business. However, statistics show that the proportion is much lower in Saudi as well as in the Middle East, in general (How Women Entrepreneurs Are Driving Business in the Middle East, 2010). The reasons for this observation are manifold and multi-leveled. On the one hand, there is the issue of institutional discrimination. In the study by Sadi and Al-Ghazi (2009), the women surveyed, numbering to more than 300 respondents identified their key problems to business success, such as “lack of market studies, lack of governmental support, lack of coordination among government departments, lack of support from the community, society restrictions and oligopolistic attitude of the investors.” Yet on the other hand, the low number of women entrepreneurs in Saudi may be in part attributed to the self-perception of women themselves, as they have not been raised to believe that they are capable and free to pursue their own enterprises. In fact, they are not even encouraged to engage in occupations traditionally perceived to be suited to men. This study indicates that perhaps this is changing. The women entrepreneurs in this study were not only involved in female-type domains such as beauty and baking but were participating in traditionally male domains such as jewelry-making, furniture production, finance and real estate.



Furthermore, a recognizable issue that cannot be evaded in the case of Saudi women is that their being able to enter into business, or any professional pursuit for that matter, does not automatically translate to equal or greater political rights as well as personal autonomy. While the freedom to pursue a career in entrepreneurship can already be considered as an attainment of certain degree of freedom—one that was not available nor even contemplated before—it cannot be denied that certain pervading discriminatory practices are still present to date and are not expected to disappear soonest. As implied by authors Dechant and Lamky (2005) as well as Le Renard (2008) and Mazawi (2002), the advancements in the realm of education of women is still being countered by long-standing beliefs and practices rooted on religious and socio-economic factors, that still give women an unfair secondary social standing.

#### A Social Transformation: Recommendations and Solutions:

To address now the question of whether Saudi women are already given the opportunity to enter business, the answer would have to be a qualified yes not an absolute one, because the success of women entrepreneurs in the country still depends on the cultural climate. Both men and women entrepreneurs face common challenges in the process of putting up and running business, however it can be said that women may have to deal with greater issues because of the social limitations still imposed against them that may or may not be directly related with business. For example, the simple fact that most women cannot travel at will or board an airplane going overseas is a limitation to their modes of action and can affect the running of a business. Indeed, these cultural nuances, if taken all together, may impact the behavior of women entrepreneurs and weaken their

conduct of business. However, as stated in this research, women business owners were utilizing the Internet to avoid similar obstacles such as forbidden interactions with non-male relatives. The Internet proved a powerful tool in marketing and the overall success of these women's businesses. In the future it can be anticipated with more female business owners will be using the Internet to their advantage in both the local and global markets.

In order to further significantly improve the status of women, government initiative is required. What is more, it is not enough for the government to draft laws that will prohibit discrimination or unfair treatment against women entrepreneurs, it is more important to see to it that said laws are being strictly implemented. It is well-known that the abolition of hegemonic practices or the enactment of laws allowing certain activities to women, such as the pursuit of education, or prohibiting discriminatory ones, is not automatically tantamount to the removal of the old discriminatory barriers. There must be a law that requires affirmative action. An example of such legislative act is one that will require schools and universities to actively recruit women members as well as employers to retain a certain percentage of women employees.

In addition, it is also imperative for the government to examine which areas in business are most crucial for women or that women find cumbersome. For example, the research survey reveals that women face issues with business funding and almost a majority (44%) have cited as their financial sources close family relatives, presumably male members who act as their guardians. In this area, the government can institute improvements by creating legislations that will create incentive to institutions for lending

business funding to women entrepreneurs or directives that will facilitate the application of women of bank loans, which is very tedious especially where the applicant do not have personal or real properties to be offered as security. On the other hand, the government can help encourage the creation of cooperatives or participatory associations whose goal is to assist women in securing capital, in addition to other needs that will help meet their goal of establishing and running a business. Finally, the government itself can extend such assistance to women entrepreneurs, subject to the usual banking or lending conditions. Indeed, the possibilities of helping women are countless.

Moreover, another vital positive step is to address the issue of self-image of women. There appears to be a huge need to help the women themselves to break away from the traditional perceptions on gender, especially of them as the weaker or less-deserving gender. This area of concern, however, is a different area of study and will require further research. However, for the purpose of treatise, it is imperative to recognize that the self-perception of women could be affecting their behaviors and thus, becomes one of the hindrances in their development of interest toward business. Even among those who are already enjoying their own enterprises, these women are said to be usually engaged in businesses that are traditionally related to femininity. Hence, while the Saudi business sector has slightly opened its doors to women, the latter are still relegated to certain areas that are considered appropriate for their gender. Again, I want to acknowledge that this research demonstrates that this could change as over half the female entrepreneurs in this study were entering traditionally male-dominated fields.

Finally, the most important step to protect women and help them advance in their chosen fields is to spread the awareness regarding their high potentials as economic contributors. This can be done through education and active public campaigns. Respect for the abilities of women must start at school, and must carry on in other areas of public life. Without such earnest desire to advance for their rights, laws and regulations will just be half-heartedly obeyed because the people do not realize their significance; or worse, they may end up as toothless legislations that are not taken seriously, especially where the risks of sanctions are not serious enough. It is said that half of the Saudi population are women. It is therefore unfortunate if this half part of the population were to become non-contributing members to the workforce and economy. Lastly, it remains an issue that the autonomy of women and their political rights are still determined by other important factors, such as culture and religion, despite their being allowed to do business or not. That women can enter into business to a certain degree is truly an attestation of some liberation and openness to change. This research has highlighted the resourcefulness and general success for Saudi women entrepreneurs coming from relatively privileged backgrounds. However, the specific impact on self-autonomy and acquisition of greater political rights will require greater research with a particular focus on that question.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## INTERVIEW

Interview questions:

1. What is your educational background?
2. Are you wealthy?
3. What made you start your business?
4. What tool do you use to communicate with market?
5. Where is the location for your business?
6. What are the stages for you to be an entrepreneur?
7. 'What is the major obstacles they face?
8. Why did the respondent agree to talk me?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

## SURVEY

1- Why did you become an entrepreneur?

2- How did you get in to the business?

3- Did you have difficulties in starting your own business?

- Yes

- No

4- If yes , what were they ?

5- Do you own your own business?

- Yes

- No

6- If No , why not ?

7- When did you start your business?

- Less than 1 year ago

- 1- 3 years ago

- 3-5 years ago

- 5-7 years ago

- 7-9 years ago

- 10 years ago

8- What is your main financial income that do you depended on other than your current business ?

- Job

- Relative (father or husbanded)
- Another business
- Loan (pmpyd )
- I have no other financial support ,only this business
- Another (please specify)

9- How successful is your business currently?

- Very successful
- Successful
- Un successful
- Very unsuccessful

10- Why is this so ?

11- What percentage of your gross receipts represent profits for you ?

- 0
- >0-25%
- >25-50%
- >50-75%
- >75-100%

12- How important is your education to your business?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not effective

13- What was the main source of funds for starting your business?

- Self financed
- Family
- Bank loan
- Program loans
- Other (please specify )

14- What is your academic education?

- Less than high school
- High school
- College
- Bachelor
- Graduate

15- Have you had obstacles to establishing your business ?

- Yes
- No

16- If yes, what are they?

- Family obstacles
- Cultural obstacles
- Training obstacles
- Education obstacles
- Financial obstacles
- Other

17- Have you ever had any training program to help to start your business?

- Yes
- No

18- If yes , what kind of training did you get ?( check all tharapply )

- In -job
- Soft training
- Technical training
- Other (please specify)

19- Was this training effective?

- Yes
- No

20- Why or why not?

21- Is transportation difficult for you?

- Yes
- No

24 - If yes, why?

APPENDIX C

TRANSLATED SURVEY IN ARABIC



## TRANSLATED SURVEY IN ARABIC

1. لماذا اصبحتي سيدة اعمال؟
2. كيف بدأت مشروعك الحالي؟
3. هل واجهتكي صعوبات في بدايات العمل ؟
  - نعم
  - لا
4. اذا كانت الاجابه بنعم ،ماهي تلك الصعوبات ؟
5. هل تمتلكين مشروعك الخاص؟
  - نعم
  - لا
6. اذا كانت الاجابة السابقة ب(لا) ، لماذا؟
7. متى بدأت مشروعك الخاص؟
  - سنة الى 3 سنوات
  - 3 الى 5 سنوات
  - 5 الى 7 سنوات
  - 7 الى 9 سنوات
  - اكثر من عشر سنوات
8. ماهو مصدر الدخل الرئيسي الذي تعتمدين عليه بالاضافة الى تجارتك الخاصة؟
  - وظيفة
  - اقارب ( اب أو زوج )
  - تجارة اخرى
  - قرض (الامير محمد بن فهد لتطوير الشباب ، مركز الامير سلطان لسيدات الاعمال )
  - لا يوجد لدي اي دعم مالي آخر ، فقط مشروعي الحالي.
  - آخر ( الرجاء التحديد )

9. ماهو تقييمك لنجاح مشروعك الحالي؟

- ناجح جدا
- ناجح
- غير ناجح
- فاشل

10. لماذا تعتقد ذلك؟

11. ما هي النسبة المئوية من إجمالي الإيرادات الخاصة بك تمثل الأرباح بالنسبة لك؟

• 0

• >0-25%

• >25-50%

• >50-75%

• >75-100%

12. ماهي اهمية مستواك العلمي بالنسبة لمشروعك؟

• فعال جدا

• اعتبارا من

• فعال باعتدال

• فعالية قليلا

• غير فعال

13. ماذا كان المصدر الرئيسي لتمويل مشروعك في بداياته؟

• تمويل شخصي

• دعم العائلة

• قرض بنكي

• برامج دعم المشاريع الصغيرة

• آخر ( الرجاء ذكرها )

14. ماهي مؤهلاتك التعليمية؟

• اقل من الثانوية

• ثانوي

• دبلوم

- بكالوريوس
- دراسات عليا
- 15. هل واجهتك صعوبات لتأسيس مشروعك؟
  - نعم
  - لا
- 16. اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم ، ماذا كانت الصعوبات؟
  - صعوبات عائلية
  - صعوبات اجتماعية
  - صعوبات في التدريب
  - صعوبات في المستوى التعليمي
  - صعوبات مالية
  - اخرى
- 17. هل تلقيت اي برنامج تدريبي قبل البدء في المشروع؟
  - نعم
  - لا
- 18. اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم، فما هو نوع البرنامج؟
  - تدريب خلال فترة العمل
  - تدريب مهاري
  - تدريب تقني
  - اخرى ( الرجاء ذكرها )
- 19. هل كان ذلك التدريب فعال ومفيد؟
  - نعم
  - لا
- 20. لماذا و لماذا لا ؟
- 21. هل المواصلات تمثل عائق لك؟
  - نعم
  - لا
- 22. اذا كانت الاجابة بنعم ، لماذا ؟

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL

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Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

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**To:** Mary Jane Parmentier  
Interdisci

**From:** Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 06/15/2012

**Committee Action:** **Exemption Granted**

**IRB Action Date:** 06/15/2012

**IRB Protocol #:** 1204007770

**Study Title:** SAUDI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS and the ATTAINMENT Of INDEPENDENCE and  
SOCIAL POWER: A Case Study of Saudi Women in Private Businesses

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.